



January 19, 2007

The Honorable Jon Sonju
Chairman
House Transportation Committee
Montana House of Representatives
PO Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Dear Chairman Sonju:

The Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA) is the national not-for-profit trade association representing manufacturers and distributors of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) in the United States. Since 1983, SVIA has promoted the safe and responsible use of ATVs through rider training programs, public awareness campaigns, and state legislation. The SVIA also serves as a resource for ATV research, statistics, and vehicle standards.

SVIA strongly supports HB 332, currently before your Committee. This bill establishes a maximum noise level for ATVs and off-road motorcycles operated on public lands. SVIA strongly supports this legislation.

Unwanted and unnecessary noise from all sources has increasingly become a societal, environmental and quality of life matter and not just another annoyance to be tolerated. In the case of off-highway vehicles, newly manufactured off-highway motorcycles must meet, and newly manufactured ATVs voluntarily meet, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency federal noise standards and are extremely quiet. The problem is not with the vehicle as originally sold, but generally arises when the owner fails to properly maintain the exhaust system or improperly modifies the system so as to produce more noise and abusively operates the product at inappropriate times and in inappropriate places. The solution lies in states establishing reasonable noise regulation for in-use motorcycles and ATVs that incorporates widely recognized sound levels and test measuring procedures and then providing for its effective enforcement.

The Society of Automotive Engineers standard J1287 is a recommended test procedure for in-use enforcement. This procedure is intended to be a pass-fail test that will screen-out those motorcycles exceeding a predetermined sound level when measured at a distance of 20 inches from the exhaust outlet. The standard describes in detail the instrumentation and procedures to be followed to conduct the test. The recommended maximum permissible sound level using this 20" test for stationary off-highway motorcycles and ATVs is 96 dB (A) unless otherwise prescribed. HB 332 incorporates these provisions.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. We urge your support for HB 332 and believe that if enacted, it will serve to enhance the recreational experience for all those who recreate on the public lands in Montana.

Sincerely,



Kathy R. Van Kleeck
Sr. Vice President, Government Relations